

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Office of the Secretary

SINCLAIR WEEKS, SECRETARY WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

For release
January 11, 1955

G-539

ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, DECEMBER 1954

Record sales of \$18 billion in December 1954 brought total annual sales for all retail stores in 1954 to almost \$171 billion, about equal to the annual sales figure set in 1953, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. December 1954 sales, adjusted for seasonal factors and trading day differences, were about 9 percent higher than December 1953 and 6 percent above November 1954.

The December sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,800 retail firms which, in total, operate some 37,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. Therefore, the advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

Gasoline service stations' annual sales increased 9 percent for 1954 compared with 1953, the largest gain among the major groups in retail trade. Annual sales increases for 1954 were also made by drug stores (4 percent) and food stores (2 percent). Sales for 1954 of retail establishments in the general merchandise, furniture, and apparel groups, and eating and drinking places were about the same (within 1 percent) as total sales for 1953. However, 1954 sales of retailers in the lumber-building-hardware and automotive groups were 4 and 5 percent less, respectively, than in 1953.

The preliminary Bureau of the Census figures for December 1954 and the full year 1954 are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics indicated that the sharp advance in December sales after seasonal adjustment, reflected both heavy Christmas buying at most types of stores as well as unusually high sales of new passenger cars.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR
DECEMBER 1954

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (Millions of dollars)				
	12 months		December 1954 (Advance estimate)	November 1954	December 1953
	1954	1953			
Retail stores, total ¹	170,806	170,739	18,003	14,523	16,445
Food group.....	41,632	40,777	3,918	3,452	3,618
Grocery stores.....	34,989	33,623	3,298	2,893	3,018
Eating and drinking places.....	13,137	13,003	1,120	1,067	1,096
General merchandise group.....	18,848	19,005	2,840	1,822	2,748
Department stores ²	10,265	10,366	1,548	1,025	1,476
Apparel group.....	10,158	10,256	1,458	920	1,364
Furniture and appliance group.....	9,082	9,125	1,025	836	1,000
Lumber, building, hardware group ³ ..	13,053	13,550	1,104	1,089	1,040
Automotive group.....	31,709	33,319	2,866	2,479	2,279
Gasoline service stations.....	11,453	10,537	1,016	994	914
Drug and proprietary stores.....	4,964	4,789	553	398	516

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (Millions of dollars)			Percent change, Nov. 1954 from--	
	1954		November 1953	October 1954	November 1953
	November	October			
Retail stores, total ¹	14,361	14,071	14,104	+2	+2
Durable goods stores, total ¹	4,948	4,689	5,005	+6	-1
Nondurable goods stores, total ¹ ..	9,412	9,382	9,099	0	+3
Food group.....	3,494	3,522	3,375	-1	+4
Eating and drinking places.....	1,070	1,085	1,054	-1	+2
General merchandise group.....	1,570	1,565	1,571	0	0
Apparel group.....	823	812	787	+1	+5
Furniture and appliance group.....	744	752	754	-1	-1
Lumber, building, hardware group ³ ..	1,150	1,106	1,123	+4	+2
Automotive group.....	2,685	2,485	2,776	+8	-3
Gasoline service stations.....	985	982	910	0	+8
Drug and proprietary stores.....	411	407	394	+1	+1

Source: Office of Business Economics

¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

³ Includes farm equipment dealers.